

Les Voyageurs de La Verendrye
1966

Trippers:

Although 5 trippers were hired this year we had to make do with 4 for the two sessions on account of the failure of one to report to camp. The four trippers present: Mike Brennon, Udo Buechner, Ralph Fisher and Todd Sewell, proved to be first-rate staff members and the camp did not appear to suffer from the shortage. These four men are all quite different and had different approaches to working with teens in a wilderness setting but were fairly equally successful.

This year a week of training was held at Kamp Kanawana. This included discussion and talks on: the background of the camp; the philosophy for working with teens; skill sessions; a first aid session and preparation of the equipment. I feel that for next year we can cut this time at Kanawana shorter as the week up north at Lac Landron prior to the arrival of the voyageurs offers plenty of opportunity to go over such topics. The setting along with getting the camp set up makes the sessions all the more pertinent.

Voyageurs:

The first period was full with 25 boys taking part while there were only 17 in the last session.

June 29-July 27

Udo

Don Bailey Clark Hopkins
John Hackney Howard Lewis
Bruce Robb

Todd

Tom Moyle
Derek Seaman
Paul Wittes

Jon Van Den Berg
Pierre Provost

Mike

Richard Tarlo Paul Stevenson
Ted Hopkins Kevin Cadloff
Chris Dumper Pierre Brassard
Robert Lanoue

Ralph

Bill Finlay Andre Brassard
Dave Morrow Glen Miles
John Graham Brad Elliott
Jonathan Bushnell Scott Hoover

July 31 - August 21

Mike

Bill Finlay Ian MacLaren
Terry Tustin John Graham

Todd

Tim Bowman
Brian Wallace

Mikael Stoffregen
David Wheatley

Ralph

Harold Forsberg David Lewis
Phil Mitchell Jacques Godbout
Barry Norris

Udo

Gilbert Sansoucy
Tony Theodosis

Bruce Hatcher
Philip Bushnell

The grouping of the boys into the four sections was done on the first day of camp in both cases. I travelled on the bus from Montreal to Lac Landron with the boys of the first camp and so was able to interview them and divide them into groups accordingly. The division was done mainly on the basis of preferences stated by the boys. It worked quite well and there was only one instance in which a change had to be made on account of personality clashes.

As can be seen from the above lists the fifth group was split between two of the other groups.

In the second session the grouping of the boys was done at the base camp as soon as the interviewing was done.

The first period went very smoothly except for the third last day when one of the boys decided to hitch hike down to Montreal on his own. It seems that this act was prompted partially by desire to leave and partially by the adventuresome aspect. Both his tripper and I had talked to him previously when he first mentioned his idea and felt we had discouraged him. Evidently he had fooled us for a day later he slipped away. Fortunately he arrived home safely.

In the second camp there were two boys who had to be taken into Maniwaki to the hospital. One had injured his hand treking a set of rapids and the other had severe pains in the abdomen as well as difficulty sleeping and eating. Neither boy's condition was serious and after they were treated they were allowed to return to camp.

One problem that occurred both periods was smoking. Since we had not asked for any evidence from the parents stating whether or not they allowed their son to smoke we had no effective means of control. Next year we must make sure that this matter is mentioned in the literature so that camp does not become a place for boys to gain the smoking habit.

In the coming year with EXPO in the spotlight it may prove increasingly difficult to obtain a full camp. I feel that it will consequently be necessary to intensify the advertising campaign and it might be feasible to offer a package plan for "out-of-the-province" boys by which they would visit the World's Fair either prior to or following camp.

Program:

In each period the first three days of camp were devoted to checking the skills of the "voyageurs" and training them in any areas in which they were weak. The training outline was as follows:

Canoeing: - tipping
- strokes
- packing
- portaging

Swimming: - basic skill and endurance

Equipment: - packs - packing and how to carry
- bedrolls - waterproofing
- care of equipment
- use of axes, knives and machetes

Campsites: - how to choose
- how to set up
- types of fires
- how to leave a campsite

Map and Compass

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This introductory period also gave the tripper a chance to assess the ability of his individual Voyageurs and of his group as a whole. During this period each group would also plan their trip, have it checked by the Director and arrange meeting times.

In all cases the groups went out on an extensive canoe trip during their respective periods. Each group came back to base camp several days before their departure date so as to be able to get their equipment cleaned and in top shape.

Equipment:

The tripping equipment was generally well received by the trippers. There will be need in this coming year to replace and replenish some of the supplies as some articles have reached the limit of their service. Two canoes were badly damaged in accidents through carelessness this summer and one definitely is beyond repair. One tent seems to be rotting and tears very easily. As well there are some cooking utensils lacking which should be replenished.

At the beginning of camp a new tire, which had been recently purchased for the truck, was stolen from the landing area where the vehicle is parked.

In the second period we had trouble with a push-rod on one of the valves breaking. The exhaust system also broke away from the frame and had to be reconnected and one case a spot-weld was necessary. The shock-absorbers also were showing signs of losing their effectiveness. In the first period one of the absorbers broke its anchor plate and this had to be replaced. From my observations this summer I would suggest that thought be given to replacing this truck within the next year in order to prevent incurring high repair bills.

It is suggested that a can of "OFF" be added to the "What to Bring" list as well as a varnished paddle if we do not supply a varnished one for sale. The main difficulty with the hand-made, unfinished variety that we have been providing is that they become waterlogged and rough in a short time.

Food:

The types of food used were very good and in almost all cases well received. Through talking with the trippers and from my own observations I have some recommendations which I feel are valid:

1. Change to Carnation Instant Milk - the type of powder we used was hard to mix especially after getting damp. It did not have a pleasing taste no matter how it was mixed.
2. The Pizza mixes tried this year worked out very well. It is recommended that pizzas be brought into regular use next year and the amount of spaghetti increased with Kraft Dinner being reduced accordingly.
3. The addition of kernel corn this year to provide vegetable variety proved successful and should be maintained in the menu.
4. We are overstocked in breakfast cereals. In most cases Grape Nuts were not well received and there was a lot of waste. This item can be reduced in quantity in 1967.
5. Research should be done to try to discover new types of canned meats on the market. More variety would be good.
6. The Burns Sausages were not liked but the Burns Frankfurters were very much. Concentrate more on the latter in '67.
7. The tea should be ordered in bags as the loose is difficult to handle and work with.
8. More bread should be provided - Tea Bisk is not filling the gap and lunches are inadequate and in most cases non-existent.
9. The Sunkist Orange Base was accepted much better than the Sunkist Lemon Base largely because the lemon base required sugar whereas the orange didn't.
10. The Clark's Beef Stew was in many cases liked better than the Clark's Irish Stew. A variety of both would be good. Also we might try Clark's Chicken Stew now out - same price.

Base Camp Staff:

There is a definite need for base camp boys who will be in camp when the director is not. This need was indicated this summer by the increasing number of tourists on the lake and emphasized by the loss of the truck tire mentioned earlier. Also they perform a useful function in the running of the base camp.

Base Camp Site:

Wilderness camping has an important place in the Montreal YMCA camping picture and will continue to have in the years to come. The site now being used is an ideal one. Efforts should be made directly to lease or purchase this land on Lac Landron while it is still available. It is an excellent base camp from which trips can go out and increased activity in the area will not lessen its ability to function as such.

This year a cabin has been started with the floor being laid and the walls started. It is anticipated that this building will be finished in the coming year. This will serve as the director's residence.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Soule
Director, Les Voyageurs

September 14, 1966